

Child Care in Virginia: Access and Cost



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Meeting the Needs of Working Parents

Every week in Virginia:

Nearly 394,000 children under age 6 spend some time in child care

- 231,952 are in two parent families with working parents
- 118,442 live in single parent families led by a working mother
- 36,779 live in single parent families led by a working father

Another 489,000 children between the ages of 6 and 12 have working parents.



Military families:

- 45,752 children under age 6
- 6,055 children under age 6 in the Guard and Reserve

Child Care is Expensive

Parents struggle with child care prices.

Over the past 5 years,

- Center-based care prices have increased by 14% for infants and 15.6% for 4 year-olds.
- Family child care home prices have increased by 21.4% for infants and 17.4% for 4 year-olds.



Child Care Fees



	Center-based Care		Family Child Care Homes	
Data Year	Infants	4 Year-Olds	Infants	4 Year-Olds
2013	\$10,028	\$7,696	\$8,272	\$6,656
2009	\$8,788	\$6,656	\$6,812	\$5,668
2013-2009	\$1,240	\$1,040	\$1,460	\$988
% Increase	14.11%	15.63%	21.43%	17.43%

The largest cost of providing child care is related to wages. Yet, child care wages remain low and providing child care is among the lowest paid professions.

Child Care Locations



Legend

Head Start Programs



Early Head Start Programs



Licensed Family Child Care Homes



Voluntarily Registered Family Child Care Homes



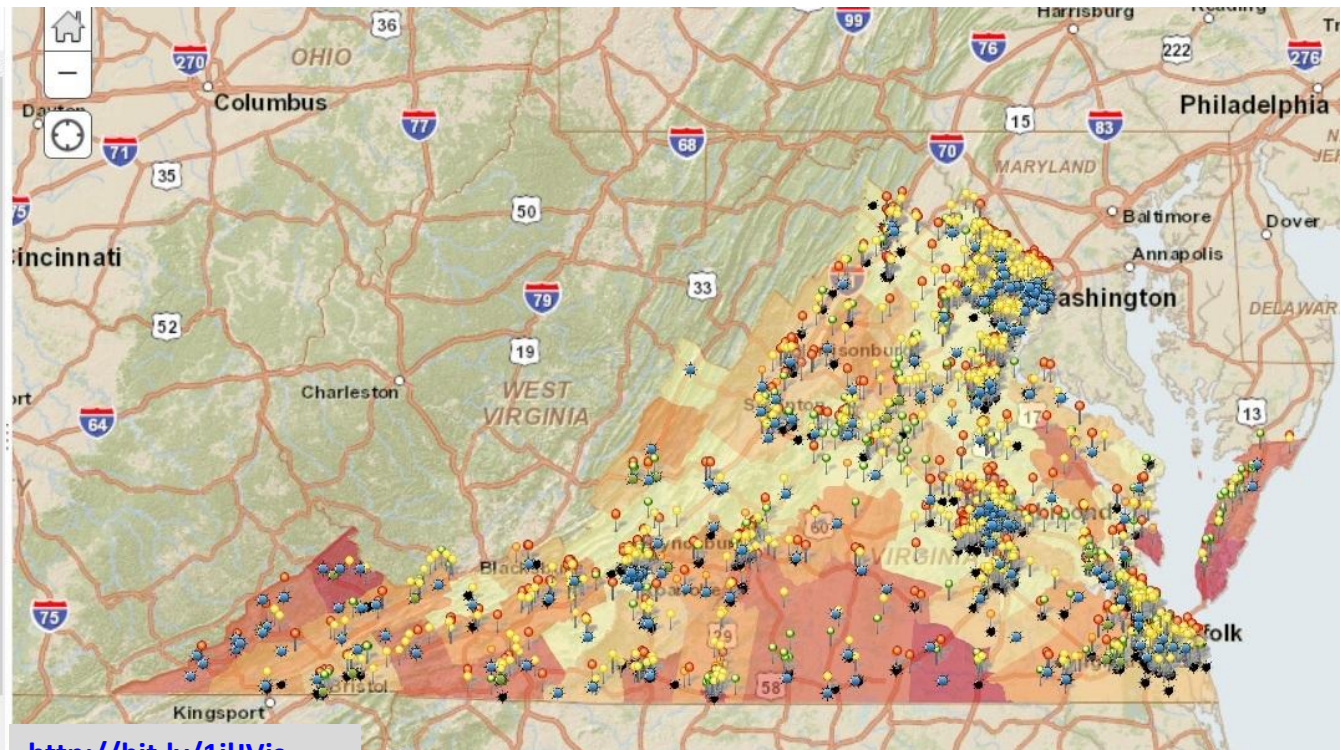
Licensed Child Care Centers



Religious License Exempt Centers

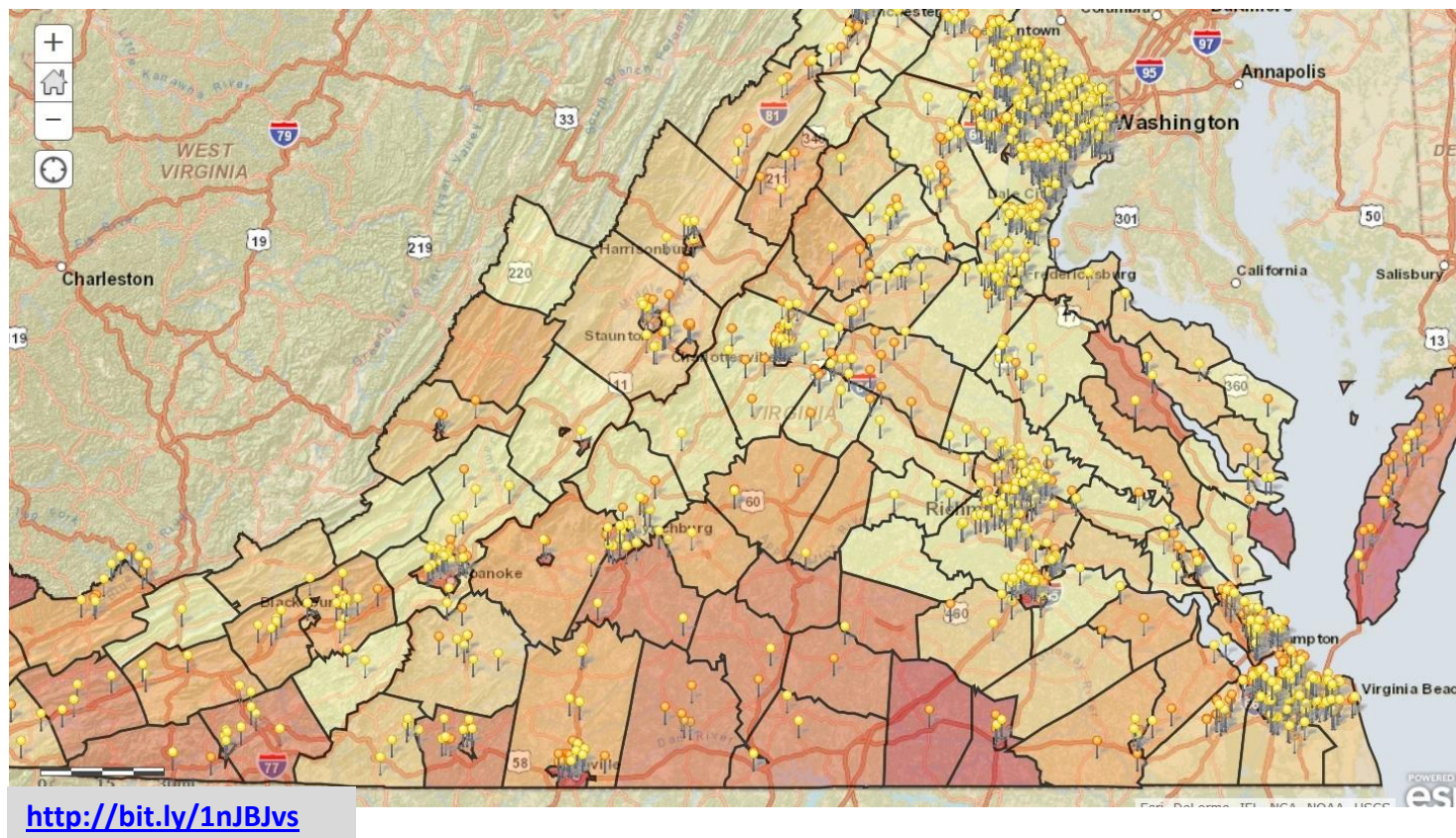


Star Rated Programs



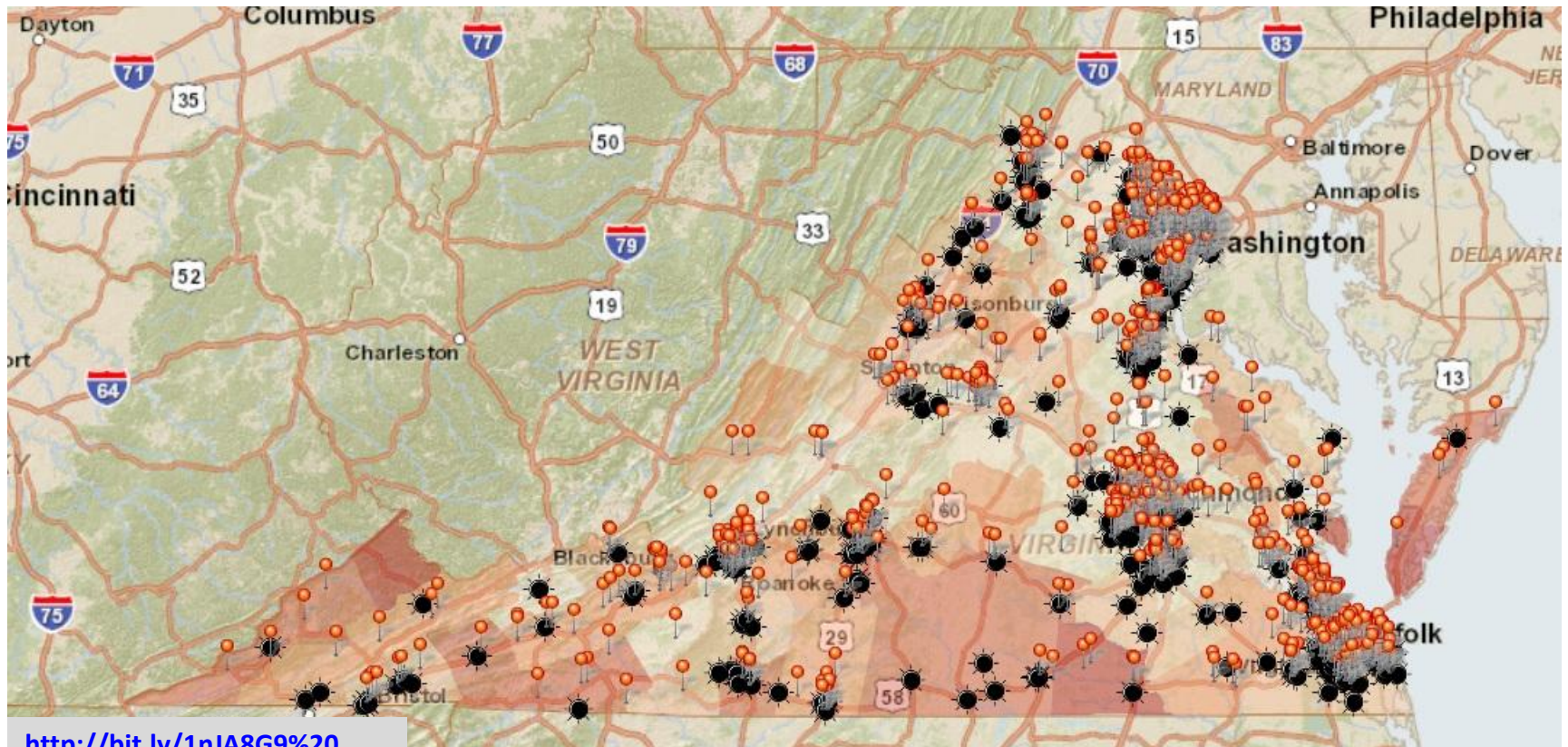
This is an overall map of child care throughout VA. Poverty is represented in increasing shades of red with the deepest poverty in dark red (46%).

Child Care Homes



As you can see, the distribution of child care homes throughout VA varies greatly. Yellow pins are licensed homes. Orange pins are voluntarily registered homes.

Child Care Centers



The distribution of centers varies greatly. Red are licensed centers. Black are religiously exempt centers.

[illegible]

Some programs participate in the VSQI. Yellow= 1 star; Gold=2 stars; Purple=3 stars; Green=4 stars; and Blue=5 stars.



Access to Child Care

Affordability is one challenge for parents.

Finding licensed care is another.

Licensing is the base on the path of quality care.

- In some areas of the state, it is difficult to find licensed care
- In many areas of the state, licensed care may be full. There are waiting lists.
- Some types of child care are harder to find (ie, infant care, nontraditional hour care, care for children with special needs, etc.).
- 14 areas of license-exempt care make choosing care confusing for parents
- High poverty areas have fewer options for licensed care

1989 JLARC Study



25 years ago, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) was charged by the Legislature to conduct a study on child care

- Except for the dates, you would think that study could have been written today
- The review is thorough, the recommendations are sound

Little has changed except:

- The number of working mothers is greater today (ie, more children need child care)
- We have data from the Washington Post and Richmond Times Dispatch about the number of deaths in child care over the past decade

Biggest finding?

- “Children in unregulated care situations are at greater risk.”

JLARC Recommendations

- The state should begin to count all related children when determining the total number of children in care within a family day care home

Child care services should be defined as any care of one or more children which meets the following criteria:

- Care is provided by one or more individuals who are not the parents or guardians of all children in care;
- Care is provided on a part-day basis (not 24 hour care)
- There is a contractual agreement with the parents of the children in care
- The provider is expected to be responsible for the whereabouts and well-being of the children while in his or her care; and
- Care is available on an ongoing, regular basis. (page 60)

JLARC estimated that 337,000 children in VA under 13 were in some type of child care. Today, there are 883,000 children under age 13 with working parents.

Protecting Children

The JLARC report noted, *“the Commonwealth has historically regulated industries and professions when there is a demonstrated need to protect the public interest.”*

Where is the public interest greater than to protect our children?

Link to full 1989 JLARC report.

<http://jlarc.virginia.gov/reports/Rpt108.pdf>



Policy Recommendations



Child Care Aware of Virginia recommends:

- Fingerprint-based background checks for child care providers;
- Requiring a child care license as soon as providers are paid to care for one unrelated child (regularly, as a business);
- Training and technical assistance to support a quality early childhood workforce; and
- Tough penalties against those providers who circumvent the law.